

WASHINGTON, D.C. U.S. Representative Sanford Bishop says he voted for the “less-than-perfect” compromise over the energy bill now moving through Congress because it promises to reduce dependence on foreign oil; spur increased production of ethanol fuel from corn and biodiesel fuel from soybeans; lower gas prices at the pump, and promote job creation and a stronger economy.

The U.S. House approved measure by a vote of 246-180, sending it to the Senate where it faced an uncertain outcome.

Representative Bishop said the bill is designed to strengthen economic and financial conditions for farm producers, small businesses, and rural-oriented regions needing a strong economic stimulus, like the area of southwest Georgia he represents. He noted that it contains provisions he does not favor. For example, he said he did not see any justification for the bill’s change in the “Leaking Storage Tank Program” that would require taxpayers, rather than polluters, to pay the clean-up costs of leaks. However, he added, the bill fulfills an overriding national need to address domestic energy issues that are crucial to the security and well being of the American people.

“This is a year of high gas prices, the largest energy blackout in history, and an economy in which many businesses and farms have struggled to survive,” the Second District Congressman said. “Although the final compromise may be less than perfect, on balance it effectively addresses many of the energy-related problems that undermine the country’s security and standard of living. It’s time to act.”

The bill includes tax and policy incentives aimed at increasing domestic oil and gas production; tax credits for ethanol, biodiesel and other renewable energy producers; incentives for utilities to improve the nation’s electricity grid; and a tax credit for buyers of hybrid cars that run on gasoline and electricity. Representative Bishop said the direct loss of federal revenue from the tax incentives, projected at \$23.5 billion over the next 10 years, should be more than offset by the bill’s positive economic impact.